

APRIL 2013

(OUR PHOTOGRAPHERS' FAVORITE PLACES TO EAT)

Best Restaurants 2013

ARIZONA

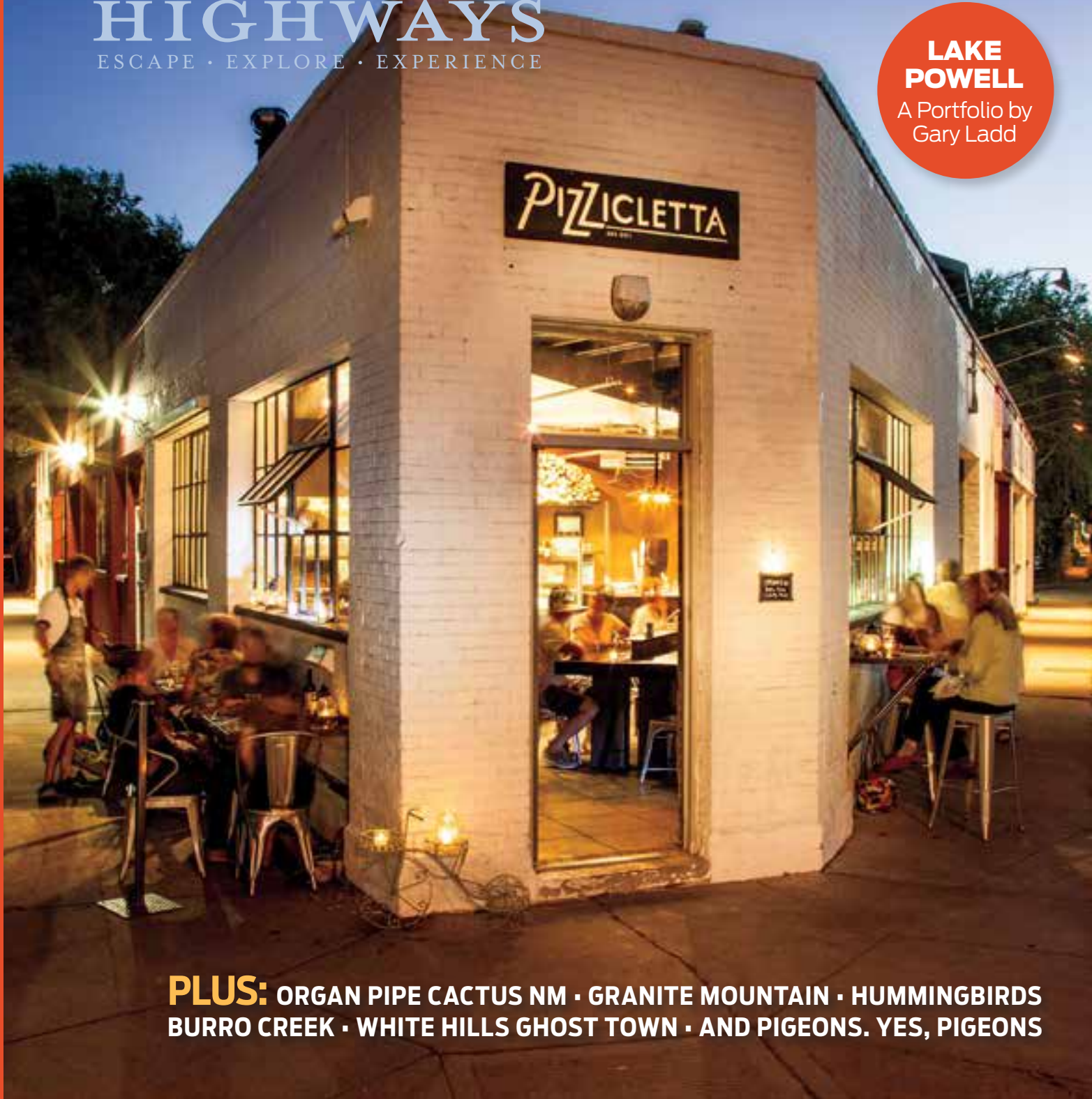
HIGHWAYS

ESCAPE • EXPLORE • EXPERIENCE

**LAKE
POWELL**

A Portfolio by
Gary Ladd

"After a good dinner one can forgive anybody, even one's own relatives." — OSCAR WILDE



PLUS: ORGAN PIPE CACTUS NM • GRANITE MOUNTAIN • HUMMINGBIRDS
BURRO CREEK • WHITE HILLS GHOST TOWN • AND PIGEONS. YES, PIGEONS

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5 THE JOURNAL

People, places and things from around the state, including a guy who buys and sells cockroaches and tarantulas; the Globetrotter Lodge in Holbrook; band-tailed pigeons (yes, pigeons); and Tuba City, our hometown of the month.

16 BEST RESTAURANTS 2013

There are many wonderful restaurants in Arizona, and every April, we spotlight some of the best. This month, we're at it again, but instead of having an editorial board make the picks, we enlisted the help of 10 of our favorite food-loving photographers.

BY NIKKI BUCHANAN
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL MARKOW

28 SPRING WATER

In Arizona, springtime is subtle, and it doesn't stir up the same fanfare it does in places like Syracuse, St. Paul and Spokane. There is a seasonal change, however. Especially in the high country, where spring snowmelt can alter the landscape. At Lake Powell, the visual effects are minimal, but come April, you can rest assured that lake levels are on the rise, and the water is too cold for skinny-dipping.

A PORTFOLIO BY GARY LADD

40 THE POWER OF LIFE IN A VERY HOT PLACE

A poignant dissertation on life, death and difficult renewal in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, a humbling place where "a short walk can take you out of this century and into a deep well of time."

AN ESSAY BY CHARLES BOWDEN
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACK DYKINGA

46 LITTLE BIRDS

Southeastern Arizona is considered the hummingbird capital of the United States. As many as 15 species can be found there, making it a mecca, of sorts, for birds and bird-watchers alike. However, recent fires, floods and freezing temperatures dramatically altered the little birds' habitat, as well as their population. Readers were worried, so we sent our writer south to check it out.

BY MATT JAFFE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRUCE D. TAUBERT

50 ACTIVE VOICE

Bobbie Holaday has spent more than three decades as an advocate for wolves and wilderness areas. Through compromise, compassion and unflinching determination, she's been a voice for those who have none. She's also a living testament to how much can be accomplished in life after the age of 65.

BY ANNETTE MCGIVNEY
PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK DURAN

52 SCENIC DRIVE

Burro Creek Crossing Road: The payoff on this scenic drive is the lush riparian habitat of Burro Creek, but the Joshua trees, saguaros and endless vistas make it something special from the get-go.

54 HIKE OF THE MONTH

Granite Mountain: The centerpiece of this hike is the mountain for which it's named, but just as impressive are the surrounding piles of 2-billion-year-old boulders the size of boxcars.



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Visit our website for details on weekend getaways, hiking, lodging, dining, photography workshops, slideshows and more.

www.arizonahighways.wordpress.com

Check out our blog for regular posts on just about anything having to do with travel in Arizona, including Q&As with writers and photographers, special events, bonus photos, sneak peeks at upcoming issues and more.

www.facebook.com/azhighways

Join our Facebook community to share your photographs, chat with other fans, enter trivia contests and receive up-to-the-minute information about what's going on behind the scenes at *Arizona Highways*.

Arizona Highways is on Instagram

Follow us @arizonahighways to see our travel photos from around the state.

► Ocotillos reach skyward in front of a butte near Bagdad. | RICK GIASE 📷 CAMERA: NIKON D300; SHUTTER: 1/125 SEC; APERTURE: F/6.3; ISO: 125; FOCAL LENGTH: 28 MM

FRONT COVER Pizzicletta, a Neapolitan pizzeria, draws rave reviews from Flagstaff locals and visitors. | PAUL MARKOW 📷 CAMERA: CANON EOS-1Ds MARK III; SHUTTER: 30 SEC; APERTURE: F/13; ISO: 100; FOCAL LENGTH: 24 MM

BACK COVER Boulders and a tree stump punctuate a sunset reflection in Lake Powell's Fence Canyon. | GARY LADD 📷 CAMERA: TACHIHARA 4X5; FILM: VELVIA 100; SHUTTER: 1/4 SEC; APERTURE: F/18; ISO: 100; FOCAL LENGTH: 210 MM

Grazing Arizona

The “Book of Big Ideas” isn’t a real book. It’s a reporter’s notebook with those four words — book, of, big, ideas — written on the cover. It sits on my desk next to a pile of blue fine-point Sharpies, just waiting to snare some of the things that rattle around my brain. Things like new story concepts, counter-intuitive alternatives for old standbys like the Grand Canyon, profile subjects, cover themes, headlines and random thoughts.

Not all of them make it into print, but some do, including this one: “photogs fave rests.” That’s how it was scribbled in the notebook. This is how it sounded in my head: *For the April issue, instead of using an editorial board to pick the best restaurants, what if we reach out to some of our grizzled photographers and ask them where they like to eat when they’re on the road?*

If you’ve ever met any grizzled photographers, that might strike you as a contradiction. And it should. Most of them live on pb&j’s and prepackaged junk food when they’re on assignment. The rest are like Paul Markow, who likes to say, “My favorite restaurant is anyplace with a drive-through window.” So, yes, there is an oxymoron that threatens this big idea, but it still works, because when photographers actually do splurge on real food, they usually go where the food is great. In theory, anyway. Opinions on food are wildly subjective.

We kept that in mind as we selected our photographers. We didn’t want extremists — too picky on one end, no palate whatsoever on the other — but we didn’t want a sterilized collection of milquetoast, either. The 10 we cherry-picked represent a reliable cross-section of men and women who understand that good food doesn’t have to come from France, and it doesn’t come smothered in ketchup. We trust their judgment, especially David Zickl’s. Of all the photographers in the mix, he’s arguably the most qualified to weigh in.

In addition to being a talented shooter, David is a graduate of the Arizona Culinary Institute. He knows great food, and his favorite restaurant is the Cliff Dweller’s Lodge in Marble Canyon. The first time he ate there, he “was shocked by the sophistication of their food.” I’ve been there, too, and I agree. Food that good is the last thing you expect in the middle of nowhere.

That’s not the case at Indian Gardens Oak Creek Market, which is run by Daniel Garland. Anything with the Garland Family name on it evokes high expectations, and this little way station (Suzanne Mathia’s pick) doesn’t disappoint. Neither does Caffè Torino in Tucson. “The food is fresh and simple,” Jack Dykinga says. And just about everything on the menu is a family recipe from Italy, including the lasagna, which is their signature dish. I don’t know if that’s what Jack ordered before he left to photograph Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, but if it was, we should all be gorging ourselves on that stuff.

You’ll see what I mean in *The Power of Life in a Very Hot Place*. Jack’s photographs are superb, and so is the writing of Charles Bowden. I’ve had the pleasure of working with Chuck for several years, and I’ve read many of his poignant and beautifully written essays, but this is his best. The concept, an obituary of sorts for Organ Pipe, was born in the Book of Big Ideas, but Chuck did all of the work. And in the process, the essay went from something grave to something hopeful, despite the realities of what’s

happening down there. As you’ll see, it’s an essay about a place that just won’t die. It’s the kind of place that Bobbie Holaday would fight doggedly to protect.

You might remember Bobbie from our February issue. She was referenced in the story *To Hellsgate and Back* — she’s the woman who gets credit for the creation of Hellsgate Wilderness. When I edited that piece a few months ago, I wrote Bobbie’s name in the Book, thinking she’d make a great profile. And she does. In *Active Voice*, you’ll learn more about this tenacious 90-year-old, whose favorite restaurant, by the way, is Poncho’s in South Phoenix. I’ve never been, but if Bobbie likes it, it must be something special. I should probably add it to the Book of Big Ideas.



PAUL MARKOW



SHANE McDERMOTT

COMING IN MAY ...

One hundred and one things you need to know about the Kaibab Plateau and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, along with some of the most beautiful landscape photographs you’ll ever see, like this shot by Shane McDermott.

ROBERT STIEVE, EDITOR

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PUBLISHER	Win Holden
EDITOR	Robert Stieve
MANAGING EDITOR	Kelly Vaughn Kramer
SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITOR	Kathy Ritchie
ASSOCIATE EDITOR	Noah Austin
EDITORIAL ADMINISTRATOR	Nikki Kimbel
PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR	Jeff Kida
CREATIVE DIRECTOR	Barbara Glynn Denney
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CIRCULATION DIRECTOR	Nicole Bowman
FINANCE DIRECTOR	Bob Allen
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	Cindy Bormanis
CORPORATE OR TRADE SALES	602-712-2019
SPONSORSHIP SALES REPRESENTATION	Erin Edelstein Hennen Publishing & Marketing Group 480-664-0541 erin@hennenprmg.com
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	editor@arizonahighways.com 2039 W. Lewis Avenue Phoenix, AZ 85009
GOVERNOR	Janice K. Brewer
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	John S. Halikowski
ARIZONA TRANSPORTATION BOARD CHAIRMAN	Victor M. Flores
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ARIZONA HIGHWAYS TELEVISION



ELLEN BARNES

If you like what you see in this magazine every month, check out *Arizona Highways Television*, an Emmy Award-winning program hosted by former news anchor Robin Sewell. For broadcast times, visit our website, www.arizonahighways.com, and click the *Arizona Highways Television* link on our home page.



GARY LADD

To most people, Lake Powell is a place to kick back on a houseboat or zip around on water skis. Or a place of loss — a result of Glen Canyon Dam disrupting the natural flow of the Colorado River. But to landscape photographer Gary Ladd, Lake Powell is “a photographer’s paradise,” as you’ll see in *Spring Water*, page 28. Ladd is drawn to the beautiful, constantly

changing nature of the reservoir. Because the water level fluctuates, sometimes by 100 feet or more, “nobody has seen Lake Powell in all of its different expressions over the years, and all of its different arms,” he says. Ladd is a longtime contributor to *Arizona Highways*. He’s currently working on a book about geology, with photos that focus on Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Vermilion Cliffs National Monument and the Grand Canyon.

NIKKI BUCHANAN

In 1984, Nikki Buchanan lived in Los Angeles and dreamed of becoming a food writer. When she told one of her friends, “he just laughed and said, ‘Great, fat chance of that,’” Buchanan says. But within a month, she heard an ad on the radio that *Phoenix New Times* was hiring a restaurant critic. She got the position. Since then, she’s been wining and dining her way across Arizona, even when she’s not on assignment. “I can’t resist going out to eat,” she says. Besides frequently contributing to *Arizona Highways*, including *Best Restaurants 2013* (see page 16), Buchanan writes for “Chow Bella,” the *New Times* food blog; *Zagat Survey*; *Food & Wine*; and other publications.



MATT JAFFE

Matt Jaffe’s fascination with hummingbirds (see *Little Birds*, page 46) started a few years ago when he observed them with naturalist Mark Pretti. “It’s amazing to realize that [Southern] Arizona is a meeting ground for species from as far away as Central America,” he says. Jaffe also was surprised to learn how much food the sprightly little birds put down. “I lost my collegiate metabolism a long time ago, so I’m envious of how much hummingbirds can eat,” Jaffe says. “I read that if they were the size of a human being, hummingbirds

would consume about 155,000 calories per day.” Jaffe has written two books about environment and culture. His work has also appeared in *Sunset*, *Budget Travel* and *Los Angeles* magazine. This is his first story for *Arizona Highways*.

— KAYLA FROST

HITTING THE TRAILS

I read with great interest the article *To Hellsgate and Back* [February 2013]. I'm too old to attempt this hike, but found the article exciting. I didn't start hiking until I moved to Arizona three years ago. I've found that Arizona is quite a diverse state for hiking. I took my first hike in the spring of 2009 with a friend who has hiked the area for 15 years. I'm 82 and she's 76. We try to hike every weekend. I've enjoyed every hike we've taken the past three years.

Ronald Wright, Mesa, Arizona



February 2013

AWE, SHUCKS

Just a note of congratulations on the January and February 2013 covers of *Arizona Highways*. In addition, the February portfolio [*Awe Nature!*] alone kept my wife and me renewing for another year. The article about Jeremy Rowe [*History Major*] is a classic, too. Also, you were bold to publish the natural history article about rattlesnakes [*This Bites!*]. Most state magazines would hesitate to do that, because it might reduce tourism.

Ken Highfill, Lawrence, Kansas

SNAKE BYTES

Being a former docent at the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum, and a Montanan, I'm very aware of definitions and descriptions when it comes to our natural wonders, whether it be geology, animals or any other category concerning our precious Arizona. I read *Arizona Highways* from cover to cover and back. Therefore, I couldn't miss the introductory paragraph in *To Hellsgate and Back* [February 2013], which stated, "... a willingness to endure triple-digit temperatures, hungry bears, poisonous snakes." I'm amazed your editors didn't catch that reference and correct it to "venomous snakes."

Jean Dundas, Tucson

Sweet Jesus. There needed to be some sort of heads-up about the snake photos in the this month's issue [*This Bites!*], February 2013]. I flipped it open and almost peed myself. That one with the snake blending into the dirt is going to sit in my brain all night.

Meghan Lambert, Camarillo, California

COWBOY OH BOY!

I just saw the article *Ode to the Roads* [January 2013]. To this cowboy photo collector, Karen Shell's image of Tony Buckman, the rodeo cowboy, was extremely impressive!

Mike Lutes, Killeen, Texas

MCQUEEN IS KING

I enjoyed reading Joe Brown's reminiscence of the "King of Cool" [*On Location With Steve McQueen*, January 2013]. He's probably my favorite actor, so I've seen almost all of his movies. McQueen always seemed so smooth, natural and easygoing in his roles. It's nice to learn that he was just as down-to-earth in real life.

Pete Kurtz, Cincinnati

A QUESTION REMAINS

A big reason we've subscribed to *Arizona Highways* for decades is the appealing mix of Arizona history and scenes, and current events and photos. The sketch and photo of Frances Munds in the January 2013 issue is a prime example. We finished wanting to know more, including whether she was part of the family after which Munds Park, south of Flagstaff, is named.

Marilyn & Dick Kemp, Phoenix

BIG BROTHER IS READING THIS

Your January 2013 issue was one of the best ever — full of great stories and history. I've been blessed to receive your magazine through the generosity of my little sister, a resident of Saddlebrook, outside of Tucson. Through your articles and superb photography, coupled with our occasional visits to Arizona, we're

able to capture the beauty and broad expanse of your state.

Jack Wehl, McMillan, Michigan

PICKUP LINES

For years, I've subscribed to *Arizona Highways*, and I enjoy each magazine thoroughly. In your November 2012 issue, on page 23, there's a photograph of Whiskey Row in Prescott that piqued my interest. In 1957, my father, my uncle and I were building power lines north of Prescott. I was living at Granite Dells Trailer Park. In your photograph, there's a 1957 Pontiac and a 1956 pickup. I believe the Pontiac belonged to my parents, due to the fact there was no other car like theirs in town. That picture brought back many memories, as I was 21 years old at the time.

Joe Bush, Baker City, Oregon

BLUE NOTE

The article on Olive Oatman [*Blue in the Face*, February 2013] was interesting to me because I watched a show on television last year called *Hell on Wheels*, which was supposed to be about the building of the railroad across the American West. What was interesting to me is that one of the girls has the exact same tattoo as Ms. Oatman on her chin. Of course, I'm sure hers was painted on for the show, and wasn't real like Ms. Oatman's.

Marie Locklin, Titusville, Florida

contact us If you have thoughts or comments about anything in *Arizona Highways*, we'd love to hear from you. We can be reached at editor@arizonahighways.com, or by mail at 2039 W. Lewis Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85009. For more information, visit www.arizonahighways.com.



ADRIEL HEISEY

THE HOLE PICTURE

The sun illuminates a sandstone cliff through a window-like rock formation in Northeastern Arizona. The formation bears no name in the topographic names database, and "even the location doesn't have an easily recognized identity," according to aerial photographer Adriel Heisey. "Any of these would be roughly correct: Black Mountain, Chinle Valley or Carson Mesa."

📷 CAMERA: PENTAX 645; SHUTTER: 1/250 SEC; APERTURE: F/8; ISO: 800; FOCAL LENGTH: 100 MM



TUBA CITY

FOUNDED
1872
AREA
8.9 square miles
ELEVATION
4,960 feet
COUNTY
Coconino

THE NAVAJO NAME FOR TUBA CITY — Naneesdizí — translates to “Tangled Waters.” So named because of below-ground springs that provide water to an otherwise arid Painted Desert, it lies in the western region of the Navajo Nation, not far from the eastern entrance to Grand Canyon National Park. Although Tuba City is predominantly populated by Navajos, it was named for Hopi leader Tuuvi, who invited Mormon pioneers to settle near Moenkopi. Today, the town boasts a number of tourist attractions, including the Explore Navajo Interactive Museum and a series of dinosaur tracks 5 miles west of the city center. And, as with so many Arizona towns, football is the king of high-school sports. The Warriors of Tuba City High School went 3-11 last season.

— KELLY VAUGHN KRAMER

Navajo Nation, www.navajo-nsn.gov;
Explore Navajo Interactive Museum, www.explorenavajo.com

local favorites



DON B. STEVENSON

CAMERON TRADING POST Cameron

Cameron Trading Post, which has served travelers on their way to the Grand Canyon for nearly 100 years, is a one-stop shop: a lodge, restaurant, gallery, gas station and gift shop. Longtime manager Jimmy Jensen says visitors often stop by for unique Native American crafts, such as intricate kachina dolls that took six months to carve and handmade sterling-silver jewelry.

Talk about the crafts you sell.

They are handmade and one of a kind. We make sure crafts are made by Native Americans. We have a person whose only job is to go out and see artisans make jewelry, buy it and bring it to the store.

Are there any risks to buying Native American jewelry at the Trading Post?

If customers purchase Native American jewelry, and if something were to happen to the piece, they can send it back to us and we'll send it back to the silversmith to have it fixed.

How have the demographics of your visitors changed over the years?

We've had a lot more European, Chinese and Japanese visitors — a lot fewer Americans. Maybe their money is better. Most of them are visiting the Grand Canyon, about 30 minutes away. If you're headed that way, Cameron's the last big stop before the South Rim.

— KAYLA FROST

Cameron Trading Post is located 54 miles north of Flagstaff on U.S. Route 89. For more information, call 800-338-7385 or visit www.camerontradingpost.com.

MARK LIPCZYNSKI

~history~

The Hills Aren't Alive

In its heyday, White Hills was a bustling mining town. But like a lot of others, it went bust — and fast. Today, all that remain are a few crumbling foundations and a historical marker.

If you look toward White Hills, you won't see much. But back in its heyday, it was a thriving mining town in Mohave County, not far from Kingman.

According to a story by C.E. Cooley in the February 1948 issue of *Arizona Highways*, White Hills was founded in 1892 after an Indian showed his prospector friend “pretty colored rocks.” Turns out those “rocks” were, in fact, silver ore. The prospector promptly staked his claim.

Shortly after the discovery was reported, the area became a boomtown, with settlers staking their own claims. Homes were built, along with stores, a school, a post office and, of course, saloons. Nothing deterred the town's growth, not even the lack of water, which had to be hauled in. “The mines were booming, and building continued,” Cooley wrote. “New streets were laid out in anticipation of a larger city. Money was plentiful and rolling in from all sides.”

White Hills was a gleaming city in the desert.

Over a six-year period, the town prospered, netting some \$12 million in gold and silver. Eventually, though, the silver and



MOHAVE MUSEUM

The population of White Hills peaked at 1,500 during the gold and silver boom.

gold yields dwindled, the cost of living skyrocketed and, in 1899, a flood devastated the mine shafts.

Today, White Hills is a ghost town, and the only reminders of its existence are a few building foundations and a historical marker.

— ANDREA CRANDALL

this month in history

■ On April 1, 1931, President Herbert Hoover establishes Canyon de Chelly National Monument to preserve its 4,000-year-old archaeological resources.

■ The Battle of Picacho Pass — the only Arizona-based battle of the Civil War

— takes place on April 15, 1862.
■ State offices are closed on April 15, 1915, as thousands of people gather to witness the first spillage of water over Roosevelt Dam in the Salt River Valley.

■ On April 16, 1912, Lee William “Flame” Delhi from Harqua-

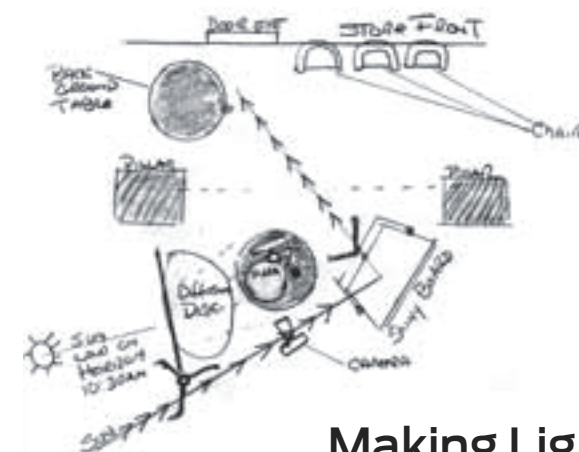
hala (now a ghost town) becomes the first Arizonan to play in a Major League Baseball game.
■ Charles Debrille Poston is born on April 20, 1825. Poston is known as the “Father of Arizona” for his efforts in lobbying for the creation of the Territory.

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS 50 Years Ago



Petrified Forest National Park was the focus of our April 1963 issue. America's 30th national park contains the world's largest and most colorful petrified wood. The wood, millions of years old, displays fossils and petroglyphs.

~photography~



PAUL MARKOW

Photographing Renee's Organic Oven required a fair amount of planning by Paul Markow. It included a sketch of his setup, as well as the use of special lighting.
CAMERA: CANON 1DS MKIII; SHUTTER: 1/200 SEC; APERTURE: F/5; ISO: 100; FOCAL LENGTH: 50 MM

Making Light of the Situation

PAUL MARKOW BEGAN HIS PROFESSIONAL CAREER MORE THAN 40 YEARS AGO, shooting corporate and commercial assignments. Much of his early work was studio-based and dependent on powerful strobes with light modifiers. Grids, snoots, soft boxes and octaboxes are just as important as his cameras, but with changes in the economy and technology, Paul's had to adjust his shooting and lighting style. The photo on this page (above, right) is a good illustration. Paul arrived for an assignment at Renee's Organic Oven in Tucson at 10:30 a.m., long past the window for “magic light.” He quickly scouted the interior and realized that much of the décor was black, making any indoor photograph a challenge. Although the light wasn't great outside, Paul thought he could make the shoot work — but with some modifications. He decided on his camera angle, arranged a table and hung a sheet of diffusion material, which would soften the sunlight and give some dimension to the frame. He then placed a shiny board to the right of the table and used it to bounce sunlight onto a background table he had strategically placed. Paul arranged the pizza and a small white reflector card, which he placed just to the right of the food. Finally, he made his shot — no big power packs or softboxes, just a simple set of tools and a little bit of vision.

— JEFF KIDA, photo editor

PHOTO TIP



Neutral Density

One of the most difficult scenes to photograph is a landscape with a bright sky. Photographers often choose

whether to expose for the sky or for the foreground, sacrificing one for the other. However, by using a graduated neutral density filter (pictured), the over-bright portion

of a scene can be slightly darkened. These filters transition from a neutral density to clear glass, and they can darken a sky while allowing the foreground to remain perfectly exposed.

ADDITIONAL READING

Look for our book *Arizona Highways Photography Guide*, available at bookstores and www.shop.arizonahighways.com/books.





BUG GUY

Kenneth MacNeil, Tucson

GOOTY ORNAMENTAL (its scientific name is *Poecilotheria metallica*) is a \$700 female tarantula that's available for sale at Tucson Reptile Shop. Owner Kenneth MacNeil, or "Ken the Bug Guy," as he's known, has been selling insects, arachnids and other creepy crawlers for the past seven years. "We've got tarantulas, scorpions, centipedes, spiders, millipedes, assassin bugs, isopods, beetles and roaches," he says. Roaches? "It's a huge hobby, a lot more popular than you'd think. I probably sell at least 5,000 roaches a year." Besides bugs, MacNeil also sells reptiles. With a business like his, you'd think it would be tough to find a partner, but MacNeil's wife, Georgianna, a.k.a. "The Bug Wife," is his biggest supporter. "My wife loves them as much as I do," he says. "She's a big part of the business, and without her, I couldn't do it."

— KATHY RITCHIE

For more information about "Ken the Bug Guy," visit www.kenthebugguy.com.

DAWN KISH

~ dining ~

Costa Doing Business

It's a long way from Bolivia to Jerome, but Vladimir Costa made it. Now, the chef-owner of 15.Quince Grill and Cantina is taking his "food is life" philosophy and spreading it to taco-hungry tourists and regulars alike.

15.QUINCE GRILL AND CANTINA IN JEROME isn't just a restaurant, it's the realization of one man's imagination. In March 2009, chef-owner Vladimir Costa opened Quince in what once was the state's first Safeway store, and if the little hidden

jerome

gem is Wonderland, Costa is Alice.

"Everything you see [here] is my vision," he says. "I don't have partners. I don't have consultants. It all comes from my mind."

Turquoise-colored walls are covered in crosses and ornately decorated steer

skulls. Images of Frida Kahlo and the *Virgen de Guadalupe* occupy wall and table space. Day of the Dead keepsakes are scattered throughout. There's meaning in every detail. Even the name Quince is significant — according to Costa, the number represents humility.

At lunchtime, Quince is packed, and it's easy to get lost in the cacophony. The kitchen is just a few feet away, and dishes clank, pots bang and laughter erupts from almost every table. Costa's New Mexican-style cuisine is exquisitely prepared. Fresh, fragrant and full of color and flavor, every bite is just a little bit of heaven.

First-timers should try the fish tacos. The fish is battered using Full Moon Belgian-style white ale from Mudshark Brewing Co. in Lake Havasu City. Each taco — there are three per serving — is covered with a mango pico de gallo, cabbage and sweet pomegranates.

The enchiladas also are incredible — smoky with enough heat from Hatch chiles to make them delicious, but not so much that it overwhelms the dish. Of course, if you do need to put out a flavor fire, there's nothing like one of Costa's freshly made margaritas. That is, with the exception of the Spicy Guera, which is made with jalapeños.

For the tattooed, Bolivian-born Costa, food is love. "People don't think about what they're actually putting into their bodies," he says. "Food is an afterthought." Needless to say, he's serious about his craft and everything that comes out of his kitchen.

"I'm feeding people. That's where it starts. I'm feeding a customer, a human being, a friend, a guest," he says. "Food is art. Food is life. Food is love. Food is family."

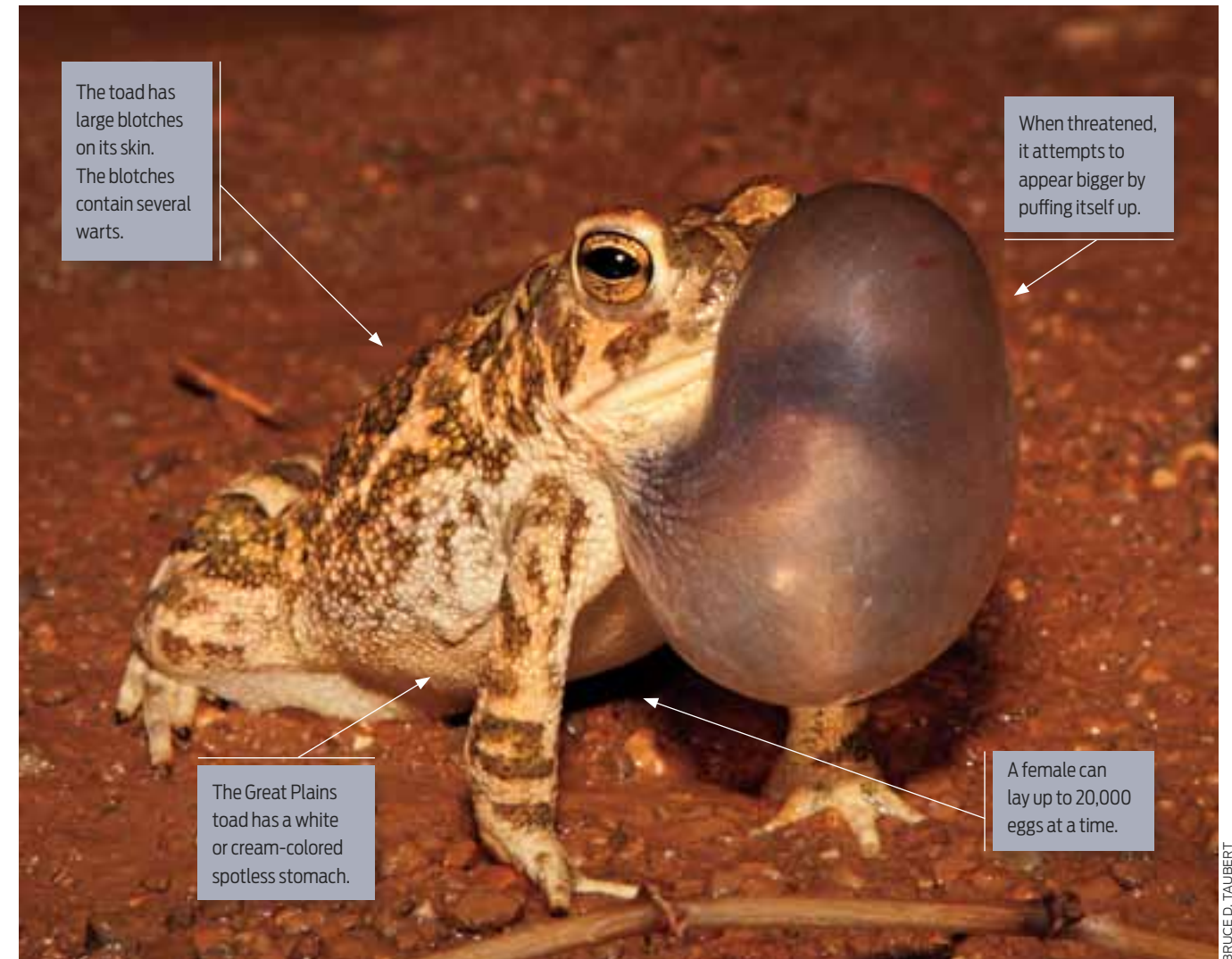
— KATHY RITCHIE

15.Quince Grill and Cantina is located at 363 Main Street in Jerome. For more information, call 928-634-7087 or visit www.visitjeromeaz.com.



JEFF KIDA

~ nature ~



The toad has large blotches on its skin. The blotches contain several warts.

When threatened, it attempts to appear bigger by puffing itself up.

The Great Plains toad has a white or cream-colored spotless stomach.

A female can lay up to 20,000 eggs at a time.

BRUCE D. TAUBERT

ONE FOR THE TOAD

During the spring and summer months, and after heavy rains, you might hear a deafening chorus of high-pitched trills. The mating call of the male Great Plains toad can last up to a minute and is meant to attract a bevy of female callers.

The gray, brown or green toads can be found across Arizona, except in the higher mountain regions and the driest portions of the desert. They're most commonly found in valleys, mesas, roadside ditches and cattle troughs.

These accomplished burrowers usually emerge around dusk to forage for food, including termites and worms. When threatened, the nocturnal amphibians take deep breaths and puff themselves up to appear bigger than they really are. And they're poisonous, too — if a predator happens to bite into the toad's parotid gland, the gland emits a viscous white liquid, inflaming the predator's mouth and causing nausea, an irregular heartbeat and, sometimes, death.

— ANDREA CRANDALL

nature factoid

BAND-TAILED PIGEONS

The band-tailed pigeon, considered the largest pigeon in North America, is blue-gray with a white crescent at the nape of its neck and a dark gray band across the top of its tail. The vegetarian bird eats fruits, nuts and seeds, and makes a one- or two-syllable cooing sound, similar to that of an owl. The pigeon can be found in the mountain regions of Arizona from late March to mid-October, as it migrates south to Mexico for the winter.

— ANDREA CRANDALL



BRUCE D. TAUBERT

~lodging~



MARK LIPCZYNSKI

Globetrotter Lodge

PETER AND MONA HOELLER and their daughter, Larissa, found the shadow of Route 66 and its glory days when their around-the-world travels brought them from Austria to the former Sun n' Sand Motel in Holbrook. Like so many Route 66 motels, what once was a welcome respite for weary travelers had become run-down and shuttered. When the Hoellers' time on the road ended in 2010, they decided to breathe new life into Holbrook's slice of Route 66 by transforming the Sun n' Sand into the Globetrotter Lodge. Elements of "back home" adorn all 10 rooms, as

holbrook

well as the lobby, where Peter's handcrafted furniture came to rest after making the trek across the Atlantic. German-speaking guests can curl up with the cherished books that Mona inherited from her aunt and that fill the bookshelves in each room. But the handmade, Talavera-inspired bathroom sinks are a reminder that this still is the American Southwest. Route 66 may be their adoptive home, but if the myriad license plates in the parking lot are any indication, the Hoellers have resurrected that fading nostalgia. — JACKI MIELER

The Globetrotter Lodge is located at 902 W. Hopi Drive in Holbrook. For more information, call 928-297-0158 or visit www.hotelsholbrookaz.com.

~ things to do in arizona ~

Symphony Orchestra April 12, Flagstaff

"Rach the House" as Russian concert pianist Vassily Primakov performs Rachmaninov's *Concerto No. 2* and Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 6*. Information: 928-523-5661 or www.flagstaffsymphony.org

Birding & Nature Festival April 18-20, Yuma

Because of its location along the Colorado River flyway, and its unique mix of desert, mountain and riparian habitat,

Yuma is home to more than 400 bird species. This festival is a great introduction to the diverse outdoor adventures available throughout the area. Information: 928-376-0100 or www.yumabirding.com

Chalk It UP! April 20-21, Prescott

Get ready to doodle on a grand scale as you create sidewalk-chalk masterpieces. "Chalk It UP! Prescott" helps cultivate and support creativity in people of all ages and

abilities. Information: 928-308-8762 or www.prescottchalkart.com

Mariachi Conference April 24-27, Tucson

This international conference features performances by mariachi musicians and *baile folklórico* dancers. Information: www.tucsonmariachi.org

Photo Workshop:
Havasupai
May 6-10, Havasu Canyon
Join award-winning *Arizona*

Highways photographers Suzanne Mathia and Derek von Briesen on this journey to the "Shangri-La" of the Southwest: Havasu Canyon. This small branch of the Grand Canyon is home to Havasu, Navajo and Mooney falls, three of the most spectacular waterfalls in the American West. Participants of this workshop will enjoy the best photo opportunities at this unique and beautiful site. Information: 888-790-7042 or www.ahpw.org **ah**

Our world in pixels



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Months spent traversing Italy by bicycle inform the menu at Flagstaff's Pizzicetta, a Neapolitan pizzeria and favorite of photographer Dawn Kish.



2013 Best Restaurants

There are many wonderful restaurants in Arizona, and every April, we spotlight some of the best. This month, we're at it again, but instead of having an editorial board make the picks, we enlisted the help of 10 of our favorite food-loving photographers.

BY NIKKI BUCHANAN • PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL MARKOW

Average Entrée Cost
\$ = \$10 and under
\$\$ = \$11-\$19
\$\$\$ = \$20-\$30
\$\$\$\$ = \$30+

Pizzicletta

FLAGSTAFF

Recommended by Dawn Kish

ESTABLISHED: 2011

CUISINE: Italian

CHEF: Caleb Schiff

PRICE: \$\$

OPEN: Dinner

INFORMATION: 203 W. Phoenix Avenue, Flagstaff, 928-774-3242, www.pizzicletta.com

● Chef-owner Caleb Schiff spent months riding his bicycle (*bicicletta*) through Italy, sustaining himself on pizza and gelato. Now he applies what he learned about freshness and simplicity to the short but oh-so-sweet menu at his tiny pizza joint, housed in a wedge-shaped historic building. Using the domed wood-burning oven he built himself, Schiff turns out lavishly topped Neapolitan-style pies, antipasti and dreamy Tuscan-style gelato, the recipe gleaned from a gelato-making friend in Italy. Customers call ahead to reserve a loaf of Schiff's rustic bread, offered Friday through Sunday.



"A friend took me there, and I loved the building, the owner, the fresh ingredients, the wine list and the divine pizzas."

— DAWN KISH



ABOVE: Pizzicletta attracts Flagstaff visitors and locals six days a week.

LEFT: Server Erika Keller displays a popular "pizza rossa" (red sauce) offering.



The food isn't the only authentically Mexican thing about Asi Es La Vida, where the walls are adorned with symbols of traditional Mexican culture.

Asi Es La Vida

PHOENIX

Recommended by Kerrick James

ESTABLISHED: 2002

CUISINE: Regional Mexican

CHEF: Irving Rodriguez

PRICE: \$\$

OPEN: Lunch, Dinner

INFORMATION: 3602 N. 24th Street, Phoenix, 602-952-1255

● Once upon a time long, long ago (like the early '90s), there was a Mexican restaurant called Such Is Life, which created a stir for turning out regional Mexican dishes instead of the usual cheddar-cheese-topped AZ-Mex standards. When the Rodriguez family bought the business 10 years later, they changed the name to Asi Es La Vida ("such is life" in Spanish), but kept the same commitment to authenticity. Their faintly upscale little place is adorable, thanks to brightly colored walls, plants, Mexican art and furniture, and the menu hews to tradition, offering cochinita pibil (Yucatan), molé poblano (Puebla), ceviche (coastal) and sincronizadas (Chihuahua).

"I love the watermelon agua fresca; oh my God, it's like nectar. This is truly a family restaurant, offering real Mexican food, not Mexican-American food, in a relaxed atmosphere." — KERRICK JAMES



The Steak Out

SONOITA
Recommended by Paul Markow
ESTABLISHED: 1951
CUISINE: American/Steaks
CHEF: Vince Govier
PRICE: \$\$-\$\$\$
OPEN: Lunch (Sa-Su), Dinner
INFORMATION: 3200 S. Sonoita Highway, Sonoita, 520-455-5205, www.azsteakout.com

● The original building (Sonoita Mercantile, back in the day) burned down in 1997, and when this popular steakhouse was rebuilt in 1999, owners Grace and Michael Wystrach invited local ranchers to brand the walls. Decorated with saddles, bronze statues, oxen yokes, wagon-wheel chandeliers and cowboy art, the place is an ode to the Old West, offering mesquite-grilled steaks, homemade pinto beans and country music on weekend nights. Nowadays, there's a second location in Marana, but it's hard to beat the original for emulating the Cowboy Way in an iconic, far-as-the-eye-can-see Western setting.

"There's always a film crew or a celebrity at another table, because the grasslands of Sonoita look like somewhere else. If you're not drinking wine, you invariably end up doing so at this fun-looking log-cabin-ish place, which serves great steaks and burgers." — PAUL MARKOW



TOP: Saddles and saloon doors give The Steak Out an Old West vibe.
ABOVE: The rebuilt Steak Out restaurant in Sonoita, shown here, was joined in 2004 by a second location in Marana.

Cliff Dwellers Lodge

MARBLE CANYON
Recommended by David Zickl
ESTABLISHED: 1951
CUISINE: American/Modern American
CHEF: John Cochran
PRICE: \$\$-\$\$\$
OPEN: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
INFORMATION: 928-355-2261, www.cliffdwellerslodge.com

● Fly-fishers and river-rafters flock to this rustic old lodge because of its proximity to Lees Ferry on the Colorado River. A hard bed, clean sheets and a meal (decent or otherwise) are generally their only requirements. Instead, they're treated to hearty breakfasts and first-rate lunches, both served with spectacular views of the Vermilion Cliffs. Come nightfall, looming peaks and a sky full of stars provide a romantic backdrop for inspired dinners of Alaskan king crab legs, New Zealand rack of lamb and sesame-crusted ahi, drizzled with wasabi sauce. A super-friendly service staff makes the experience all the more delicious.



"When I first saw this run-down 1950s motel, I assumed its restaurant would be a-shot-and-a-beer cowboy joint, where I'd be lucky to get a cheeseburger. I was shocked by the sophistication of the food. They work hard at feeding people well."
 — DAVID ZICKL

Views of the Vermilion Cliffs are a trademark of the Cliff Dwellers Lodge, located on the road that connects the Grand Canyon's North and South rims.

Dahl & Di Luca Ristorante Italiano

SEDONA

Recommended by Derek von Briesen

ESTABLISHED: 1995

CUISINE: Italian

CHEF: Lisa Dahl

PRICE: \$\$-\$\$\$

OPEN: Lunch, Dinner

INFORMATION: 2321 W. State Route 89A, Sedona, 928-282-5219, www.dahlanddiluca.com

With its crystal chandeliers, heavy draperies, gorgeous table settings and Italian art, this multi-award-winning Red Rock Country mainstay exudes Old World charm. Chef-owner Lisa Dahl (who wrote *The Elixir of Life* cookbook in 2010) is committed to local, organic ingredients whenever possible, turning out picture-perfect salads, rustic soups, house-made pastas and Italian classics (think scampi fra diavolo, fettuccine primavera and veal saltimbocca), as well as the occasional inspired creation such as grilled Scottish salmon finished with a limoncello reduction. The global wine list, which features Super Tuscans and other regional Italian wines, impresses for its breadth and affordability.

"You can tell how good a restaurant is going to be by the quality of its bread. Dahl & Di Luca rolls out great bread and wonderful pasta. The menu spans a nice range, and you can get dressed up and take clients there or go in wearing jeans and hiking boots." — DEREK VON BRIESEN

The Old World feel of Dahl & Di Luca's dining room and wine selection combines with the 21st century flavor of live music and locally sourced, organic ingredients.



Dara Thai Café

WILLIAMS

Recommended by Mark Lipczynski

ESTABLISHED: 2008

CUISINE: Thai

CHEF: Pranee Adachi

PRICE: \$-\$\$

OPEN: Lunch, Dinner

INFORMATION: 145 W. Route 66, Suite C, Williams, 928-635-2201

Pranee Adachi and her daughter, Jarunee Krathinthong, own and operate this small, cozy place, where houseplants and café curtains conjure Grandma's house — if Grandma were from Thailand. Adachi, who learned her fresh-ingredients philosophy from her own mother (a caterer in Thailand), makes everything from scratch, including her own curry paste and coconut ice cream. Customers, in turn, rave about her curries, Pad Thai, Dara tofu and award-winning Evil Jungle Princess, marveling that some of the most authentic Thai food in the state is found in Williams.

"It's just a little no-frills hole in the wall, but the food is very authentic and very, very good. You don't expect to find that in a meat-and-potatoes town like Williams."

— MARK LIPCZYNSKI



ABOVE: Pad Thai is a favorite order at Dara Thai Café.

LEFT: Pranee Adachi and her daughter, Jarunee Krathinthong, serve dishes inspired by Adachi's mother's recipes.

Los Hermanos

SUPERIOR

Recommended by Elias Butler

ESTABLISHED: 1976

CUISINE: Mexican/American

CHEF: Richard Tameron

PRICE: \$

OPEN: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

INFORMATION: 835 W. U.S. Route 60, Superior, 520-689-5465, www.loshermanosrestaurant.com

● Founded by six brothers (*hermanos* in Spanish), this no-frills operation — outfitted in vinyl and Formica — offers honest, made-from-scratch AZ-Mex at its basic best. Thick house-made chips and plenty-hot salsa are the prelude to enchiladas, tostadas, posole and the best refried beans for miles around. Some people save room for desert empanadas; others just fill up on ultra-thin, transparent tortillas (made with lard, yay!) cranked out from the adjacent tortilla factory, which also is owned by the Tameron family and their one lone *hermano* with a different surname: Donlin.



"I make it a point to stop at Los Hermanos every time I'm in Superior. It feels like old-school Arizona. The tortillas are awesome and the green chile is especially delectable. I always get some to take home."

— ELIAS BUTLER

A destination for cowboys and anyone else who appreciates a no-frills meal, Los Hermanos has been serving up made-from-scratch AZ-Mex food for more than two decades.



Caffè Torino

ORO VALLEY

Recommended by Jack Dykinga

ESTABLISHED: 2000

CUISINE: Northern Italian

CHEF: Daniela Borella

PRICE: \$-\$\$\$

OPEN: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

INFORMATION: 10325 N. La Canada Drive, Tucson, 520-297-3777, www.caffetorinoorovalley.com

● Daniela Borella says her Italian-born mother (from Torino) and father (from Bologna) offer inspiration and support at her intimate, upscale neighborhood restaurant, hung with vintage family photos and the work of local artists. So it's no wonder her lasagna (made with Dad's Bolognese) and her spaghetti with meatballs are legendary. Although veal Marsala, chicken Valdostana and bistecca alla Toscana (not to mention white tablecloths and an extensive wine list, peppered with Italian labels) suggest fine dining, Borella insists that it's her adherence to fresh ingredients and simple, well-prepared dishes that wins her such a loyal following of locals, golfers and, yes, photographers.

Caffè Torino's lasagna, made with the chef's father's Bolognese recipe, is the stuff of legend among Tucsonans and tourists.

"I've been going to Caffè Torino — and taking other photographers there — since it first opened. It's everybody's favorite place because the food is fresh and simple and, like *Cheers*, everybody knows your name." — JACK DYKINGA



Indian Gardens Oak Creek Market

OAK CREEK CANYON

Recommended by Suzanne Mathia

ESTABLISHED: 1984

CUISINE: American

CHEF: Daniel Garland

PRICE: \$

OPEN: Breakfast, Lunch, Early
Dinner

INFORMATION: 3951 N. State Route
89A, Sedona, 928-282-7702,
www.oakcreekmarket.com

● Situated on the winding road through Oak Creek Canyon, this rustic, flower-bordered country store has been operated by various members of the Garland family (of Garland's Lodge fame) since the '80s. Now that Daniel Garland has made it his baby, the recently remodeled place, finished with local rock, has blossomed into an artisanal way station, stocked with craft beer, Arizona wines and locally sourced products. In the fall, the kitchen turns Oak Creek apples into applesauce, apple butter and apple muffins. But tourists and locals show up all year long for excellent homemade soups and gourmet sandwiches, garnished with local tomatoes and house-made organic pesto when the season allows.

"Indian Gardens has always been my favorite stop-off point after early morning shoots up the canyon. After a long hike, there's nothing better than a great sandwich and a really good cup of tea in their beautiful, secluded garden under a canopy of trees." — SUZANNE MATHIA



TOP: Indian Gardens Oak Creek Market has become a destination for craft-beer enthusiasts and wine lovers.

ABOVE: House-made organic pesto and local toppings take the market's sandwiches to the next level.

Booga Red's

SPRINGVILLE

Recommended by George Stocking

ESTABLISHED: 1980

CUISINE: Mexican/American

CHEFS: Gaby Ruiz, Tina Irigoyen

PRICE: \$-\$\$

OPEN: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

INFORMATION: 521 E. Main Street,
Springville, 928-333-2640

● Edgar Merrill — a red-haired, rough-and-tumble carpenter with the nickname "Booga Red" — opened this down-home Mexican/American restaurant (and built its bar) 32 years ago, and it hasn't changed much since. Now it's owned and operated by Merrill's granddaughter Melissa Madariaga and her husband, Buster, who still turn out praiseworthy huevos rancheros, chicken-fried steak and St. John's tacos (filled with ground beef and griddled in the shell). Filled with hunting trophies and frequented by locals who hunt, fish and cowboy, the place is famous for both its red and green chile, made from generations-old family recipes.



The taco salads and beers are both larger than life at Booga Red's, which has served up Mexican-American delicacies for more than three decades.

"On the Mogollon Rim, green chile is a dish, not a garnish like it is in New Mexico.

Booga Red's green chile is the best I've ever had — not on-fire hot, just flavorful — and made just the way I like it: about 85 percent green chile and 15 percent meat."

— GEORGE STOCKING



For signature recipes from each of our Best Restaurants, scan

this QR code or visit www.arizonahighways.com/travel/dining.asp. [AH](#)



SPRING WATER

IN ARIZONA, SPRINGTIME IS SUBTLE, AND IT DOESN'T STIR UP THE SAME FANFARE IT DOES IN PLACES LIKE SYRACUSE, ST. PAUL AND SPOKANE. THERE IS A SEASONAL CHANGE, HOWEVER. ESPECIALLY IN THE HIGH COUNTRY, WHERE SPRING SNOWMELT CAN ALTER THE LANDSCAPE. AT LAKE POWELL, THE VISUAL EFFECTS ARE MINIMAL, BUT COME APRIL, YOU CAN REST ASSURED THAT LAKE LEVELS ARE ON THE RISE, AND THE WATER IS TOO COLD FOR SKINNY-DIPPING. | **A PORTFOLIO BY GARY LADD** |



[above] The 10,388-foot summit of Navajo Mountain towers more than 6,700 feet above a tranquil bay near the mouth of Cascade Canyon. 📷 CAMERA: TACHIHARA 4X5; FILM: VELVIA 100; SHUTTER: 1/15 SEC; APERTURE: F/20; ISO: 100; FOCAL LENGTH: 210 MM
[right] On the southern edge of Padre Bay, ancient ripple marks are preserved in the Carmel Formation. Padre's Butte is mirrored in the background. 📷 CAMERA: TACHIHARA 4X5; FILM: VELVIA 100; SHUTTER: 1/8 SEC; APERTURE: F/25; ISO: 100; FOCAL LENGTH: 75 MM





Buttes surround the southern end of Face Canyon at sunset.

📷 CAMERA: TACHIYARA 4X5; FILM: VELVIA 100; SHUTTER: 1/8 SEC; APERTURE: F/25; ISO: 100; FOCAL LENGTH: 125 MM

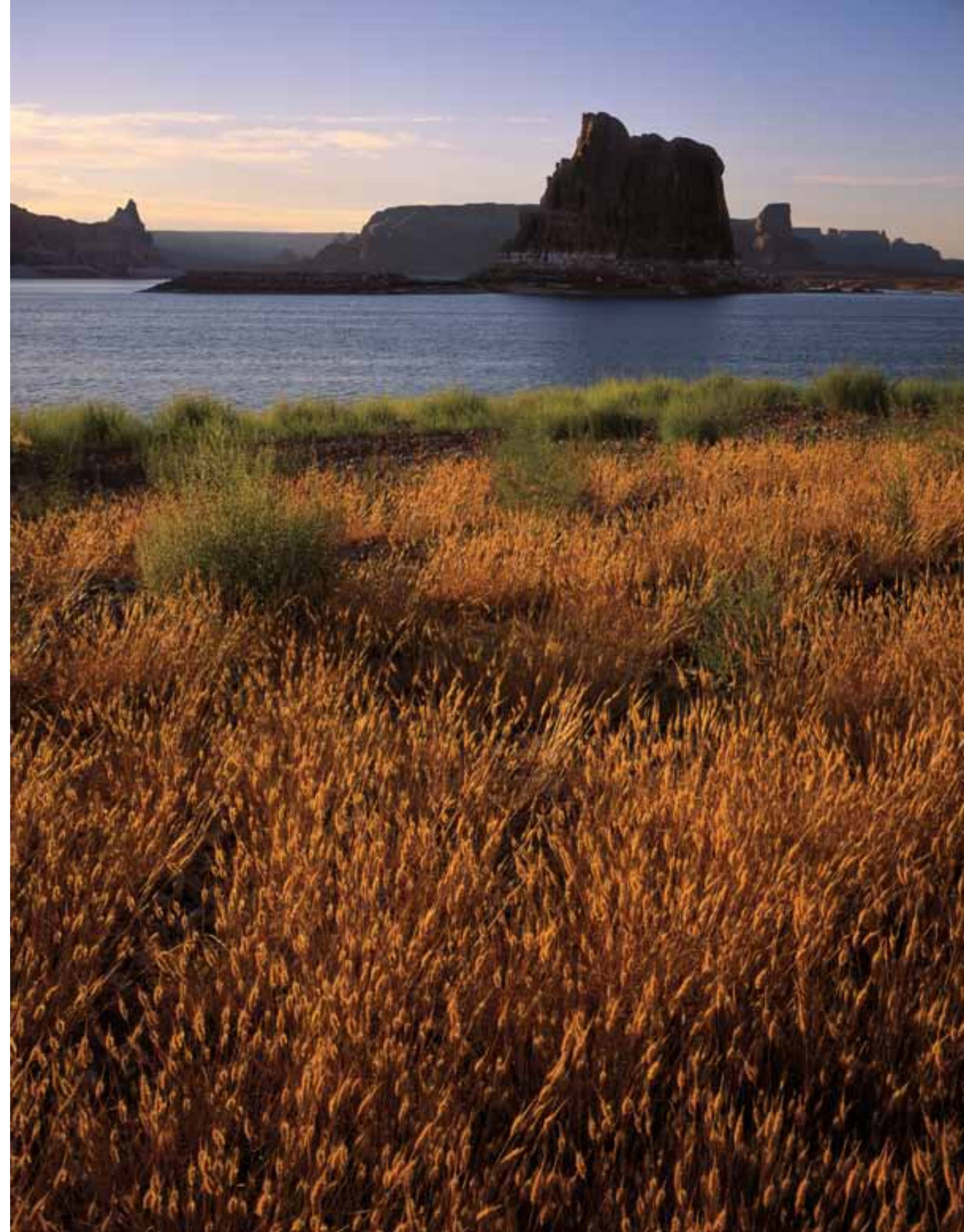


[above] Falling water levels at the lake have isolated basins such as this one near Cookie Jar Butte.

📷 CAMERA: TACHIHARA 4X5; FILM: VELVIA 100; SHUTTER: 1/15 SEC; APERTURE: F/20; ISO: 100; FOCAL LENGTH: 75 MM

[right] Kane Point (left) and Padre's Butte (center) jut from the lake just after sunrise.

📷 CAMERA: TACHIHARA 4X5; FILM: VELVIA 100; SHUTTER: 1/8 SEC; APERTURE: F/36; ISO: 100; FOCAL LENGTH: 210 MM



Colorado River cobbles, comprised mostly of quartzite, lava and limestone, cover a knob of rock near Labyrinth Canyon. Boundary Butte is in the background.

📷 CAMERA: TACHIHARA 4X5; FILM: VELVIA 100; SHUTTER: 1/15 SEC; APERTURE: F/22; ISO: 100; FOCAL LENGTH: 210 MM





[above] A February sunrise silhouettes Boundary Butte (right) and fills the sky and the lake with color.
📷 CAMERA: TACHIHARA 4X5; FILM: VELVIA 100; SHUTTER: 1/2 SEC; APERTURE: F/20; ISO: 100; FOCAL LENGTH: 125 MM

[left] At midday, the sun illuminates the chamber immediately upstream from the Cathedral in the Desert.
📷 CAMERA: TACHIHARA 4X5; FILM: VELVIA 100; SHUTTER: 1/2 SEC; APERTURE: F/16; ISO: 100; FOCAL LENGTH: 125 MM [AH](#)

THE POWER OF LIFE IN A VERY HOT PLACE

A rainbow appears as a thunderstorm approaches at sunset in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. The organ pipe cactus takes 150 years to reach maturity and usually grows to about 16 feet tall.

A poignant dissertation on life, death and difficult renewal in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, a humbling place where “a short walk can take you out of this century and into a deep well of time.”

AN ESSAY BY CHARLES BOWDEN PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACK DYKINGA





THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN A CROSSROADS
AND THIS HAS LONG BEEN A BIG EMPTY
BECAUSE THE RAINS HARDLY COME AND
THE SUN GNAWS AT HUMAN SCHEMES.

Rock daisies
peek from the
crevices of a
rock formation
at sunset in the
Puerto Blanco
Mountains.

The good country begins on the edge of the nation. We have declared a border, but life, the plants, animals and dreams, rolls out as an unbroken fabric. The place began for me in some long ago when I traveled the desert with Julian Hayden, the man who found traces of early man in the black rock

to the south. He wrote the book on the archaeology of the Pinalate region across the line in Sonora. He stopped at Organ Pipe to say hello to the granddaughter of Don Alberto Celaya, and Don Alberto had as a young boy guided Carl Lumholtz, the Norwegian explorer, into the country in the first decade of the 20th century. Lumholtz became the man who wrote *New Trails in Mexico*, the first view of the region for most of the world. And then when Hayden showed up in the early '50s, Don Alberto as an old man taught him the country also.

For me, the place is rich with ghosts. Julian Hayden's ashes are scattered on a hillside overlooking a crater just across the line. Edward Abbey, another friend, sleeps in the desert west of Organ Pipe. And then there are the vanished people of the springs at Quitobaquito, the Sand Papago, Hia C-ed O'odham, the last true nomads of the United States. I come for the memories, and what I remember here is the world before I was born and the world before the United States was born. This dry country is the bedrock of my dreams.

Brittlebush blooms yellow high in the Ajo Mountains of December and the view stretches west and south in the heart of the Sonoran Desert. The national monument rides on the border of the United States, a place where the core flora of this tropical desert lap across our borders and bring intrusions of organ pipe cactus and senita, two signature species of the great desert itself. The *badjas* are forests of saguaros mingled with cholla and creosote. Up on the mountain the creosote gives way to brittlebush and the big cactuses seem to bob in waves of the gray-leafed plant. The yellow daisy flower explodes with color against the faint rose rock of volcanic tuff.

Just to the west a road, El Camino del Diablo, snakes across the desert. Four thousand Sonorans stormed down it in the gold rush of '49, among them Joaquin Murrieta, who became in legend the Robin Hood of California. The organ pipe cactus showed up around 3,500 years ago as the land slowly warmed after the end of the Ice Age. The plant crossed the border and replaced a world of oak and juniper, probing into what is now the United States for about a hundred miles. This has always been a crossroads and this has long been a big empty because the rains hardly come and the sun gnaws at human schemes. Organ Pipe makes us face the idea of borders because the southern part of the park is the border and because everything that draws us to the park has crossed the line. Organ pipe, saguaro and senita marched up from the south. Ancient paths crisscrossed the international boundary. I once walked a prehis-



THE DESERT SWEEPS ON AND ON AND THE SILENCE OF THE DESERT ERASES OUR EGOS.

toric shell trail with a friend that arced up from Cholla Bay just north of Puerto Peñasco to Ajo and then on to Phoenix, a path, then as now, moving through languages and peoples.

The Hia C-ed O'odham, the people of the vast desert flowing west and south, were said to sell their dreams, a natural product if you stick around here long enough. They were the masters of this area and their lives flowed from the Ajos to the Gila River and down into the black-rock country and the Gulf of California. They knew this desert in a way I never will, and wandered it with an ease I will never attain. The place humbles us. Here people struggle to find a drop of water and yet are surrounded by trees and huge cactuses that flourish.

The large cities of the Sonoran Desert — Phoenix, Tucson, Hermosillo — shelter on the edge where rivers come out of the mountains and meet the hot ground. Think of them as harbors facing a burning sea. Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument is out in this big

empty. Here truths survive that the cities never learn. One is that the stars hum in the night sky. The second is that nothing can endure in the desert that denies the lack of rain. Another is that in the core of the summer you can hear the heat pound the land. And finally, there is the lesson that deserts have no center. Like the sea, they ignore our craving for security, boundaries and havens. The desert sweeps on and on and the silence of the desert erases our egos. We finally begin to exist as something beyond our everyday cares and worries. The border of our body vanishes and we become one with the land.

I leave the road, walk out into a forest of saguaros, the ground a pavement of stone fragments. A phainopepla, a small black cardinal-like bird, lands on a palo verde. A Gila woodpecker calls. A red-tailed hawk rides past. These tiny events go away and there is the faint breeze, the green of the creosote leaves, the sun pouring down on the land. I am now at the hardest

scenic point to reach: nowhere. I wander through the saguaros. I sit on the ground. And then I stop making notes. That is when I know I finally arrive. The swoosh of a raven's wing becomes an event.

To the west, there is no settlement until the Colorado River; to the south, a volcanic wilderness, the Pinacate reserve, parallels the park; to the north is Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge. Thousands of square miles without a house or person. A dream has haunted me for decades. It came to me at the *tinajas* in the Pinacate where I slept in sleeping circles left by the people thousands of years ago. Sometimes, it came on night walks across the Cabeza Prieta. There were those days at Heart Tank, the nights on the west edge of Organ Pipe, the moonrise on the delta of the Colorado when a coyote howled and I faced the protected zone of the upper Gulf, a place where blue whales still prowl the sea.

There is a mosaic of life and emptiness lingering in government refuges in Northwest Sonora and Southwest Arizona, a potential national park that can one day spill across the border of two nations and lurch into being. That's my dream. For the moment, Organ Pipe is a piece of this possibility. As the world shrinks these last fragments of space and silence will grow as a dream in the minds of others and I think my dream will one day be a reality. Like all dreams, it seems impossible until it comes to be. After all, there was a time when Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument was inconceivable to most people.

Of late, this has been a place of siege. Kris Eggle, a park ranger, was murdered here in 2002 when a gunfight spilled north across the border. Migrants seeking work in the United States trashed the backcountry. Drug smugglers slashed 200 miles of new roads. Only 31 percent of the park is now open to visitors.

So what is it like? Quiet and safe and empty. It is like being the private owner of a national park. Visitation has sunk from 300,000 a year in the 1990s to 30,000 a year now. The park is now shielded with car barriers on the border and stuffed with agents. It is almost certainly safer than wherever you are as you read this. Organ Pipe is the long view of life. The ironwood trees dotting the land can live 500 to a thousand years. The mayhem of our moment is just that, a moment. The park lives by a different clock.

Deserts are often described as wastelands because it is difficult to turn their beauty into towns and money. Organ Pipe was mauled by mining dreams and roads and overgrazed for much of the 20th century, all in the hope it could be beaten into submission. A handful of people, Bill and Birdie del Miller, Rube Daniels, Henry Gray, Abraham Armenta, took a stab at ranching and farming here and in the end, the land beat them all. These failed ventures often brutalized the ground. But what is striking, even in this place of low rainfall and difficult renewal, is to feel how much the ground has recovered. Buildings slowly sink back to

the ground at the old Gray Ranch headquarters close by Bates Well, but what a person senses there is a small footprint of our kind being slowly devoured by the inferno of the desert. You turn your back on the scraggly buildings, look west toward the Growler Valley and think of words like *infinity* or *deep space*.

Organ Pipe, like all national parks, is an agreement between the American people and their ground. It is not an episode but an abiding promise that if we take care of this good Earth, it will in turn tend to us. Organ Pipe has been through some hard days lately but they are but a flicker in the life of this place and in our life in this place. It was created in 1937 and became part of a new kind of thinking for us as a people. In the beginning, national parks tended to be spectacular scenery. Organ Pipe was created to protect an ecosystem and its beauty became a bonus. The result is a huge slab of the Sonoran Desert featuring organ pipe cactus. And space. And silence. Almost all of it is managed as wilderness, which means a short walk can take you out of this century and into a deep well of time.

The Valley of the Ajo sweeps south. To the west, the Bates Mountains and Cipriano Hills, the latter named after a Mexican businessman and outlaw. To the east, the palisades of the Ajo Mountains, and to the south, the Puerto Blanco mountains. Along the border, the La Abra Plain and the Sonoyta Valley. A sprawl of country with Quitobaquito tucked away in the southwest corner only 200 yards from the international boundary.

The springs at Quitobaquito capture both the moment now sweeping over Organ Pipe, and how brief this moment is in the history of the place. The only real water in the entire park, the springs host the endangered Quitobaquito pupfish and Sonoran mud turtle. Once, this water marked a boundary of sorts between two language groups of the Tohono O'odham, the desert people. The Spaniards found it by the late 17th century and always there have been efforts to turn the water onto fields.

The first time I saw the springs it felt like some mirage of ponds and birds and trees. Now I cannot see it at all because the road to it has been closed for security reasons. The pupfish can be seen in a small pond at the visitors center, one named after Kris Eggle, the murdered ranger. The fish in the small pool of water move at my shadow hoping for food, the males flashing blue. They are here in case things go bad at the springs since the water level is dropping there.

But this closure of the road to Quitobaquito will pass, as have so many things here. The current tempest will sweep off the desert into the dust of a history book and peace will return. I stand in the shade of an ironwood that is likely older than my nation and I have the faith of a pupfish, surviving century after century in a desert. Organ Pipe is open for business and its business is to teach the power of life in a very hot place. We made a deal with the ground and the bad times cannot touch our dreams. **AH**

ABOVE: The sun gilds organ pipe cactuses and other desert plants. The organ pipe cactus is rare elsewhere in Arizona but more common in Mexico.



Dwarfed by a thistle, this adult male rufous hummingbird is vulnerable to insect-eating birds and animals because of its small size — about 3 inches long. Females have green feathers on their heads.

📷 CAMERA: CANON EOS-1D MARK IV;
SHUTTER: 1/320; APERTURE: F/20;
ISO: 400; FOCAL LENGTH: 292 MM

LITTLE BIRDS

Southeastern Arizona is considered the hummingbird capital of the United States. As many as 15 species can be found there, making it a mecca, of sorts, for birds and bird-watchers alike. However, recent fires, floods and freezing temperatures dramatically altered the little birds' habitat, as well as their population. Readers were worried, so we sent our writer south to check it out.

BY MATT JAFFE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRUCE D. TAUBERT

THE LAST THING I expect after days of watching hummingbirds chattering and dog fighting — their wings blurred at 50 beats per second and feathers flashing iridescent reds, violets and oranges — is to find one sitting silently in my unaccustomed hand.

Our lives have crossed at Casa de San Pedro Bed and Breakfast in Hereford, where Sheri Williamson, a leading hummingbird expert and cofounder of the Southeastern Arizona Bird Observatory, is examining and banding the birds.

After hatching a few months earlier, maybe as far north as Alaska, the female rufous hummingbird is pausing in Arizona during her first migration to wintering grounds in south-central Mexico.

I'm part of a different kind of migration, one in which life-listing birders (and casual observers like me) fly in for one of two annual peak seasons when as many as 15 hummingbird species are found locally — and Southeastern Arizona earns its reputation as the hummingbird capital of the United States.

The rufous is resting, a bit dazed, after the strangest few minutes of her life. First, a remote-controlled net dropped around the feeder where she was drinking. She fluttered and chirped in protest, but, once firmly in Williamson's grip, settled down.

That's not always how it goes. "Some of them really thrash and squirm and squeal and hiss and sputter and shriek and growl and carry on like savage little Tasmanian devils," Williamson says.

After fitting the rufous with a numbered band made of soft aluminum, Williamson measures the beak, wings and tail. She blows into a yellow straw to part the belly feathers and expose the bird's translucent skin to assess its fat content, then slips the young female into a sling for a weigh-in on an old spring scale. The bird comes in at 3.7 grams, a little more than an old copper penny.

As I hold the rufous, awaiting her departure, what I feel doesn't register as anything I'd consider weight. What I do feel is a steady beat against my hand — the rhythm of her lungs drawing more than 200 breaths per minute. Those lungs, along with a heart that can pump 20 times per second, form the dynamo that will power the rufous on the longest migration relative to size of any bird in the world.

Assuming she leaves my hand.



HOLDING THAT RUFOUS is the highlight of a trip I almost canceled — there's no point in going to see hummingbirds where there are no hummingbirds.

It's easy to romanticize the little birds. They're among the world's most miraculous creatures, equally beloved for their vivid hues, sprite-like days spent darting among flowers, and aerobatics that let them hover and fly backward as efficiently as they fly forward. So, hummingbirds make frequent appearances in needlepoint patterns, undergrad poetry journals, and treacly songs by Cat Stevens and Seals & Crofts.

As gloriously designed as they might be, hummingbirds don't live easy lives. Last year, during the traditional spring peak in mid-April, reports came in of hummingbird numbers at maybe 5 percent of normal. Then, even those birds vanished.

"I'd see maybe one hummingbird — not one species, but one individual — every five or seven minutes," says Mary Jo Ballator, who maintains a feeding station at her Ash Canyon Bed & Breakfast in Hereford.

Williamson believes that a series of events hit Arizona's hummingbirds hard: a drought that's going on 15 years, the freeze in February 2011 that left hummingbirds dead on the ground and killed plants the birds depend on, and the Monument and Horseshoe 2 fires that swept through the Huachuca and Chiricahua mountains, respectively, in the summer of 2011, destroying nesting and feeding habitat.

"The foothills were so scorched, they were inhospitable," Williamson says. "So the hummingbirds came down to the San Pedro River. It was like a refugee camp here. All of a sudden the local birds had these strangers piling in on top of them. It was chaos."

Less understood is how conditions beyond Arizona might also have affected the populations. A sky island rising above the desert, the Huachuca Mountains are part of a migratory superhighway that connects Arizona with the Rockies, Mexico's Sierra Madre and



A female Costa's hummingbird takes aim. Named for a 19th century French nobleman, the species is known for a courtship ritual involving swoops, dives and a high-pitched whistle.

📷 CAMERA: CANON EOS-1D MARK IV; SHUTTER: 1/200; APERTURE: F/14; ISO: 400; FOCAL LENGTH: 178 MM

the tropics. The area's remarkable diversity is what draws a combination of resident species and those, like my little rufous friend, who pass through.

So Arizona's hummingbirds, if you will, are canaries in the coal mine for a big swath of North America. Ballator heard reports from New Mexico and California of abnormally low hummingbird numbers and speculated whether fires or deforestation down there had destroyed habitat along the migratory corridor.

Tom Beatty, whose apple-orchard feeding station in Miller Canyon is famous as the go-to spot for white-eared hummingbirds, recalls attending a lecture about jaguars and learning of a cold wave that dropped temperatures to near zero in mountains 150 miles south of the U.S.-Mexico border. Such weather could have killed birds, as well as food sources that typically sustain Arizona-bound hummingbirds.

"It's a solid noise, and you don't know what it is until someone points it out to you. 'That's 2,000 hummingbirds flying around!'"

Then in August, near the start of the second peak season, the hummingbirds reappeared. Ballator recalls the exact day: "On August 10, it was like someone lifted a curtain or opened the door."

Still, numbers are down from historic highs. Beatty can recall times when he ran through 47 quarts of food in a day — the most he used in 2012 was 6 quarts. But Williamson believes that after the initial destruction, the Monument Fire actually created prime conditions. It opened the forest canopy and infused soils with nutrients. Wildflowers thrived, and because hummingbirds prefer natural nectar sources to feeders, they dispersed more than usual. Then, as the bloom waned and southbound migrants came through, the hummingbirds returned to feeders and gardens.

So, I head down to see what I'll find at Beatty's and Ash Canyon.



TOM BEATTY MIGHT have had a more eventful year than the hummingbirds. In 10 minutes, the Monument Fire swept through his property beneath Carr Reef, a place where he and his wife, Edith, have lived since 1967. The fire burned more than 1,200 of his 1,300 apple trees, as well as manzanitas, sycamores and live oaks used for nesting or food by hummingbirds. Then the rains came and sent cascades of boulders and mud through his property.

"We still have a green place, but we're living pretty hard here," Beatty says.

We climb to a canopy-covered seating area that looks out on feeders hanging from limbs of white and silverleaf oaks. Thanks to feeding stations like Beatty's, spotting hummingbirds might, at first glance, seem easier than other bird-watching. For one thing, the birds come to you.

But hummingbirds are so frenetic, and with endless variations between males, females and juveniles, identifications are challenging. Although Beatty takes pride in the white-eareds that helped put him on the map — "They're worth their weight in gold," he says — he thinks visitors focus too much on life lists and photos and not enough on just watching.

"There are people who come here, then a white-eared shows up the moment they get here," he says. "And they go *click*, take their picture and don't even sit down. It's a trophy-hunter mentality, is what it is."

The white-eareds are gone for the season, but I'm amazed by the activity as Anna's, broad-taileds and magnificents dart about.

"See, you don't know any better, how's that?" Beatty says with a chuckle. "Sometimes you hear a background noise, just like the creek here. It's a solid noise, and you don't know what it is until someone points it out to you. 'That's 2,000 hummingbirds flying around!'"

Late afternoon, I stop at Ash Canyon for what Ballator calls "tank-up time," when hummingbirds can drink one-third of their body weight before nightfall. I'm hardly immune to hummingbirds' ethereal charms. But what I find most enthralling is how such beauti-

ful creatures can be as surly as sleep-deprived, Red Bull-swilling middle linebackers.

"They're monsters; they hate each other," Ballator says as a frenzy of hummingbirds dive-bombs and rousts each other from feeders. After swirling chases, they finally reach a fragile truce and settle in, glancing up frequently to take stock of rivals and scan the skies for the next blitzkrieg.

A soundtrack of staccato cheeps and whistling wings plays off thunder rumbling in from the Huachucas. Part of what drew Ballator to this property from the Bay Area in 1992 was the 5,200-foot elevation. Like Beatty's place, hers is in a transition zone between desert and mountains. "So I'm doubling up," Ballator says. "I get mountain species, like magnificents, but also Lucifers, which is a high-desert hummingbird."

Sure enough, a male Lucifer, its throat flaring purple, alights on a nearby feeder. A few minutes later, Ballator points out a male magnificent, which lives up to its name with a purple head and an almost neon-green throat.

When we move to a second spot, a plain-capped starthroat, a less-vivid, but rare hummingbird and a big draw for Ballator, lands. By this point, my eyes are more attuned to the variations, so when a male violet-crowned arrives, its coral-red bill, white belly and regally hued head make it impossible to miss.



IF I BOTHERED to keep a life list, it would have grown by three in that hour at Ash Canyon. But nothing will compare to the memory of this rufous.

While other hummingbirds fly away at the first opportunity, she's in no hurry, perhaps relishing some body heat before heading out into the surprisingly cool evening.

So the minutes pass — four, five, six — and I'm able to appreciate the delicate pattern of her plumage and the alert intensity of her eyes. I'm also, by nature, a worrier, and I ponder just how such a tiny thing will complete a journey that I can scarcely imagine making by car.

"It takes awhile for them to get their acts together," Williamson says. "Just like kids of any species, they have innate calendars and compasses to tell them when to leave and where to go, but sometimes it takes them a little while to respond to all of that. In its first migration, a bird will come through the same area from three days up to a week later than it will after it has the route mapped out in its head and is responding more efficiently to its own internal cues."

Suddenly the rufous is gone, 10 feet up, then out of sight, in search of a place to spend the night, on her own, and still weeks away from journey's end.

For more information about the Southeastern Arizona Bird Observatory, call 520-432-1388 or visit www.sabo.org. **AH**

ACTIVE VOICE

BOBBIE HOLADAY HAS SPENT MORE THAN THREE DECADES AS AN ADVOCATE FOR WOLVES AND WILDERNESS AREAS. THROUGH COMPROMISE, COMPASSION AND UNFLINCHING DETERMINATION, SHE'S BEEN A VOICE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NONE. SHE'S ALSO A LIVING TESTAMENT TO HOW MUCH CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED IN LIFE AFTER THE AGE OF 65.

BY ANNETTE MCGIVNEY PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK DURAN

"I've shed many tears,"
Bobbie Holaday says.
"But if you're passionate
about something, you
never give up."

WHEN EASTERN ARIZONA RANCHERS LEARNED in 1988 that someone in Phoenix had started a citizen organization to advocate for the endangered Mexican gray wolf, they were ready for a fight. Who had the nerve, they wondered, to seek public support for reintroducing wolves into their grazing country? But then the ranchers met their unlikely opponent: Bobbie Holaday. A mild-mannered 65-year-old mom and retired systems analyst, she didn't fit the profile of a typical eco-warrior. But Holaday was a force to be reckoned with.

"At first, they hated my guts," Holaday says. However, she gradually won the ranchers over, just as she'd done with all of the other controversial environmental causes she's championed.

Today, Holaday is a spry 90 years old and lives at the base of South Mountain in Phoenix. She's spent the better part of her 60s, 70s and 80s fighting for wild places and creatures. The Arizona Wilderness Coalition calls Holaday "one of the most dedicated and energetic wilderness advocates in the Southwest." Not only was she instrumental in helping to get the Mexican gray wolf reintroduced to the Southwest, but she also was responsible for the federal designation of two major Arizona wilderness areas.

Holaday is the daughter of a Baptist minister and grew up in New York state. "My folks always told glowing stories about the West," she says. "I had marveled at the pictures in *Arizona Highways* and knew I wanted to live in Arizona one day." Her wish came true in 1956, when she moved to Phoenix. But Holaday was a single mom raising two daughters, and she says she spent most of her time working and parenting. Then, in 1980, at the age of 57, she joined a local hiking club to get some exercise. That's when her life as a wilderness activist began.

"I really enjoyed hiking, and I started doing solo backpacking trips with my dogs in remote places like Rainbow Bridge," Holaday says. "I felt a spiritual connection to the land. I developed a kinship with those places. And I came to believe that any kind of environmental damage to wild areas would be a crime."

Soon Holaday was leading Sierra Club hikes into threatened Arizona wilderness areas. In 1981, she joined the Adopt-a-Wilderness Program, a citizen-led effort to advocate for inclusion of certain public lands under the Arizona wilderness bill that was making its way through Congress. Holaday adopted the remote and rugged Hellsgate Wilderness Study Area in Central Arizona. It was a place other volunteers avoided because of the harsh terrain and hostile ranching community. But such difficulties only strengthened Holaday's determination to fight for the protection of Hellsgate.

With the zealotry of a missionary and the methodical mind of a scientist, Holaday spent three years hiking into every corner of Hellsgate to document its natural features. She lobbied U.S. Forest Service managers and worked with local ranchers to dispel their fears about wilderness designation. She even took classes in range management at Arizona State University to better understand the ranchers' concerns.

When the Arizona Wilderness Act was signed into law in 1984, Hellsgate was included as a result of Holaday's perseverance. She then adopted the Eagletail Mountains and championed that rug-

ged desert Wilderness Study Area. Eagletail, like Hellsgate, was a hotbed of conflict with ranchers who opposed wilderness designation. But Holaday won them over, too. And in 1990, the 100,600-acre Eagletail Wilderness became the crown jewel of the Arizona Desert Wilderness Act.

"You have to be willing to leave a little shoe leather in the wilderness to get it protected, and Bobbie certainly did that," says Mark Trautwein, who was on the staff of then-Congressman Mo Udall and oversaw the passage of the federal Arizona wilderness bills in the 1980s from his Washington, D.C., office. "Bobbie represented the best qualities of citizen advocates. She proved to be invaluable to the wilderness bills because her information was so reliable and her willingness to help solve problems kept the process moving forward."

In the late 1980s, Holaday expanded beyond wilderness to wolves when she adopted a dog that was part wolf. Then, in 1988, she founded Preserve Arizona's Wolves (PAWS), a citizen wolf-advocate group that sought to gain public support for reintroducing the endangered Mexican gray wolf into the wild.

"She was persistent but also fearless," recalls Don Hoffman, a retired manager for the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests who worked closely with the wolf program in the 1980s and 1990s. When the idea of reintroducing the endangered Mexican wolf to the Blue Range Primitive Area was first circulated by federal officials, opposition from the surrounding community was fierce. Holaday was simply a concerned citizen with a big soft spot for wolves, but Hoffman says "she played a very powerful role" in finally getting the wolves released into the area in 1998. "She attended the meetings with local ranchers and tried to help them understand the benefit of having wolves in the ecosystem," he says. "There was no crowd that was too tough for her, and she was always hopeful that she'd eventually achieve consensus."

Holaday wrote a book about her experience with wolf reintroduction, *The Return of the Mexican Gray Wolf: Back to the Blue*, which was published by University of Arizona Press in 2003. She's also been recognized with prestigious awards from the Arizona Game and Fish Department, Defenders of Wildlife and the Sierra Club. But Holaday says the personal high point of her more than 30 years of environmental activism came in 1998, when she carried a cage containing one of the Mexican wolves and released it with others into the Blue Range Primitive Area, marking the beginning of the reintroduction program.

Today, the wolf program is struggling, but has approximately 50 wolves living in the wild. "I've shed many tears about the wolves, and there were times when it was so very hard," she says, noting

how some of the animals have been killed over the past decade. "But if you're passionate about something, you never give up."

Holaday doesn't hike as much as she used to, but she works out three times a week with a seniors group. And she treasured the companionship of her 13-year-old snow-white dog, Blizzard, who was half-wolf. Blizzard recently passed away.

"I still push myself," she says. "I have a lot of things yet to accomplish. And I want to have a 100th birthday party." **AH**

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Burro Creek Crossing Road

The payoff on this scenic drive is the lush riparian habitat of Burro Creek, but the Joshua trees, saguaros and endless vistas make it something special from the get-go.

BY KATHY RITCHIE PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICK GIASE

There are times when the roads that lead to a scenic drive are anything but scenic. And some roads seem endless, even boring. “Are we there yet?” becomes the mantra of those stuck in the car. Yet you drive on because the payoff — endless vistas of stunning Arizona wilderness — is worth it. The drive to Six Mile Crossing has a definite payoff, but the scenery along the way is impressive, too. This trip is all about beautiful landscapes, from start to finish.

To reach Burro Creek Crossing Road, which is the link to Six Mile Crossing, travel north from Wickenburg on U.S. Route 93. It isn’t long into the drive before the landscape is suddenly covered in Joshua trees. Designated the Joshua Tree Forest Parkway of Arizona,

this 54-mile stretch of U.S. 93 is spectacular, and because the road winds and climbs, you’re guaranteed several excellent views of these beautiful yet bizarre-looking plants. If Mother Nature is kind and the right amount of rain falls at the right time of year, clusters of white-green blossoms will sprout from the tips of the *Yucca brevifolia*.

As the signs for Burro Creek begin to appear, start paying attention to the milepost numbers. The turnoff to Burro Creek Crossing Road is around Milepost 132. Keep in mind there isn’t a turning lane, so you’ll want to slow down as you approach, and make sure you use your turn signal to give the folks behind you a heads-up. Once you make the turn, you’ll see a sign that reads: “Primitive Road. Caution. Use at Your Own Risk.”

In spite of the warning, Burro Creek Crossing Road is a well-maintained, graded dirt road that can be navigated with a sedan, weather permitting.

Heading east, saguaros, chollas and ocotillos replace the Joshua trees, and it isn’t long before you’re treated to some very nice views of Arizona’s backcountry. Although you’ll be less than a mile from the heavily traveled U.S. 93, you’ll feel a world away — other than the piles of scat, a few cattle crossings and tire tracks, it’s just you and Mother Nature. That said, take it slow and be mindful

BELOW: Saguaros reach skyward along Burro Creek Crossing Road, which feels a world away from nearby U.S. Route 93.
OPPOSITE PAGE: Near Bagdad, a solitary windmill is the only sign of civilization among the chollas.

of the occasional oncoming vehicle. For the next 7.5 miles, the road narrows as you climb the hillside. And then, at Mile 5.3, the road becomes rough, but it’s temporary. A flash-flood sign serves as a reminder to skip this drive during inclement weather.

Around Mile 8, you’ll see the tailings dam from the Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Mine. It’s an unexpected and unnatural scar on Mother Nature’s otherwise pristine canvas. As the road begins to descend in a series of switchbacks, the scenery shifts once again as cottonwood trees erupt from the ground, their leaves providing shade as you bump along toward Burro Creek.

The creek is a lush, life-giving stream for the javelinas, toads, mosquitofish and raptors that inhabit the area. It’s also the payoff of this scenic drive. Beauty certainly abounds en route, but it’s here, as you walk along the banks of the creek, where you’ll want to thank Mother Nature for her impressive handiwork.

ADDITIONAL READING: For more scenic drives, pick up a copy of our book *The Back Roads*. Now in its fifth edition, the book features 40 of the state’s most scenic drives. To order a copy, visit www.shoparizonahighways.com/books.



tour guide

Note: Mileages are approximate.

LENGTH: 29 miles round-trip (Burro Creek Crossing Road)

DIRECTIONS: From Wickenburg, take U.S. Route 93 north to Milepost 132. Turn right onto Burro Creek Crossing Road and drive 14.5 miles to Six Mile Crossing. Retrace the route back to U.S. 93.

VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: A high-clearance vehicle is suggested. Do not cross Burro Creek unless you have a four-wheel-drive vehicle.

WARNING: Back-road travel can be hazardous, so be aware of weather and road conditions. Carry plenty of water. Don’t travel alone, and let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.

INFORMATION: Bureau of Land Management, Kingman Field Office, 928-718-3700 or www.blm.gov/arizona

511 Travelers in Arizona can visit www.az511.gov or dial 511 to get information on road closures, construction, delays, weather and more. **AH**



Granite Mountain Trail

The centerpiece of this hike is the mountain for which it's named, but just as impressive are the surrounding piles of 2-billion-year-old boulders the size of boxcars. **BY ROBERT STIEVE PHOTOGRAPHS BY AARON BURROWS**

Granite Mountain. It sounds like the kind of place that Fred and Barney would take Wilma and Betty for a romantic weekend. But Granite Mountain is nowhere near Bedrock City, and time spent there is more about adventure than *amore*.

That's not to say you won't fall in love, because you will. Especially if you're attracted to wilderness areas that can be reached in a Fiat 500.

There are 15 trails in the Granite Mountain Recreation Area near Prescott, but only two go into the wilderness area, and of those, only one, the Granite Mountain Trail, approaches the summit — the actual peak looms slightly north-east of the trail's end at an elevation

of 7,626 feet. Because peak-bagging is inherent in most hard-core hikers, this route attracts a lot of interest, but it's rarely congested, and the payoff is worth sharing with like-minded enthusiasts.

The hike begins at the Metate Trailhead, which is located a few hundred yards south of Granite Basin Lake. The first thing you'll notice as you leave the parking lot is the mountain above. That's where you're headed. The next thing you'll see, right in front of you, are ponderosa pines, alligator junipers, Fremont cottonwoods, willows and other riparian organisms. The trees dominate the first stretch of the hike, which leads to the Granite Mountain Wilderness, a hyper-protected area that comprises 9,700 acres

in the Prescott National Forest. Just beyond the wilderness boundary sign, the trail dips in and out of a wash and passes a pile of the massive granite boulders that give the place its name. The rocks, some of which are 2 billion years old, come in a million sizes, with the largest measuring up to a Burlington Northern boxcar. At this point, the trail is still sheltered by the riparian web, but that'll change after another 20 minutes, when the canopy disappears and the hike arrives at Blair Pass. There's a saddle at the pass, which lies between Granite Basin and Long Canyon, and it's a good place to gear up for the trail's primary ascent. From the saddle, the route becomes

OPPOSITE PAGE: The Granite Mountain Trail approaches the summit of Granite Mountain, which looms at an elevation of 7,626 feet. **RIGHT:** Granite Mountain reflects in the still waters of Granite Basin Lake.

a series of long, moderate switchbacks, and after about 20 minutes you'll come to a monstrous alligator juniper. It's old, and it has too many branches to count — not literally, of course; that's just a way of saying it has a lot of branches. Other than a few other gators, the vegetation along this stretch is mostly manzanita and mountain mahogany. It's drier than down below, and the plant life is Exhibit A.

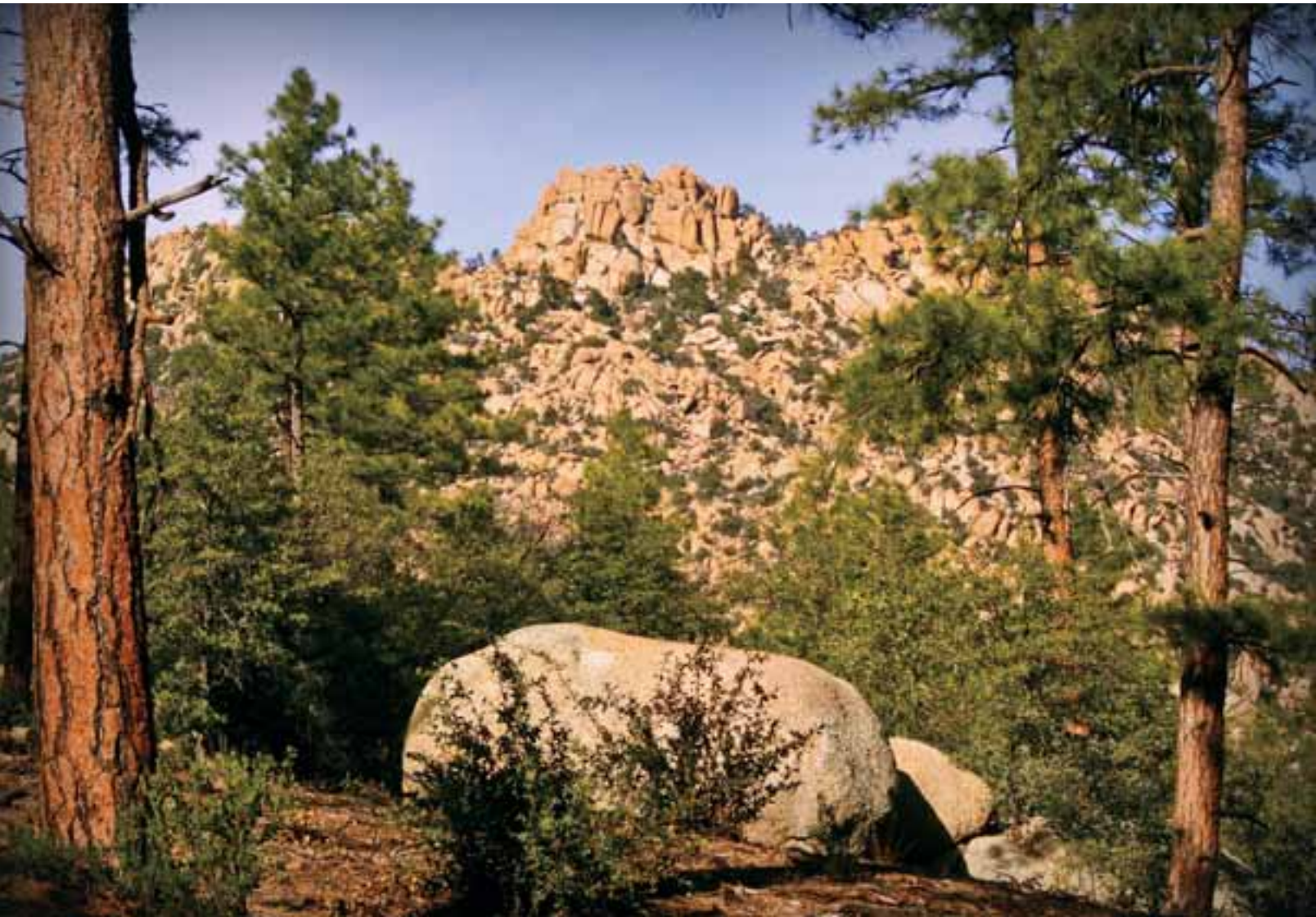
Moving on, about an hour into the hike, you'll come to the Granite Mountain Saddle, where the trail splits to the right and to the left. Keep right and continue uphill past another super-sized gator. The panorama to the south is expansive and beautiful. From there, the route climbs gradually into a forest of ponderosas and a few scattered aspens, then levels off as it approaches the Granite Mountain Vista, which is well marked. This is the end of the trail, and, as you'd expect, the views are spectacular.

From the lookout, you can see the deep-blue lake below, the Granite Dells northeast of Prescott and the Bradshaw Mountains to the south. You might also



catch a glimpse of a peregrine falcon. Between February and July, the magnificent raptors use the surrounding cliffs as a mating ground, which suggests that Granite Mountain might be a place for *amore* after all. If you hear “yabba dabba doo!” out on the trail, you'll know for sure.

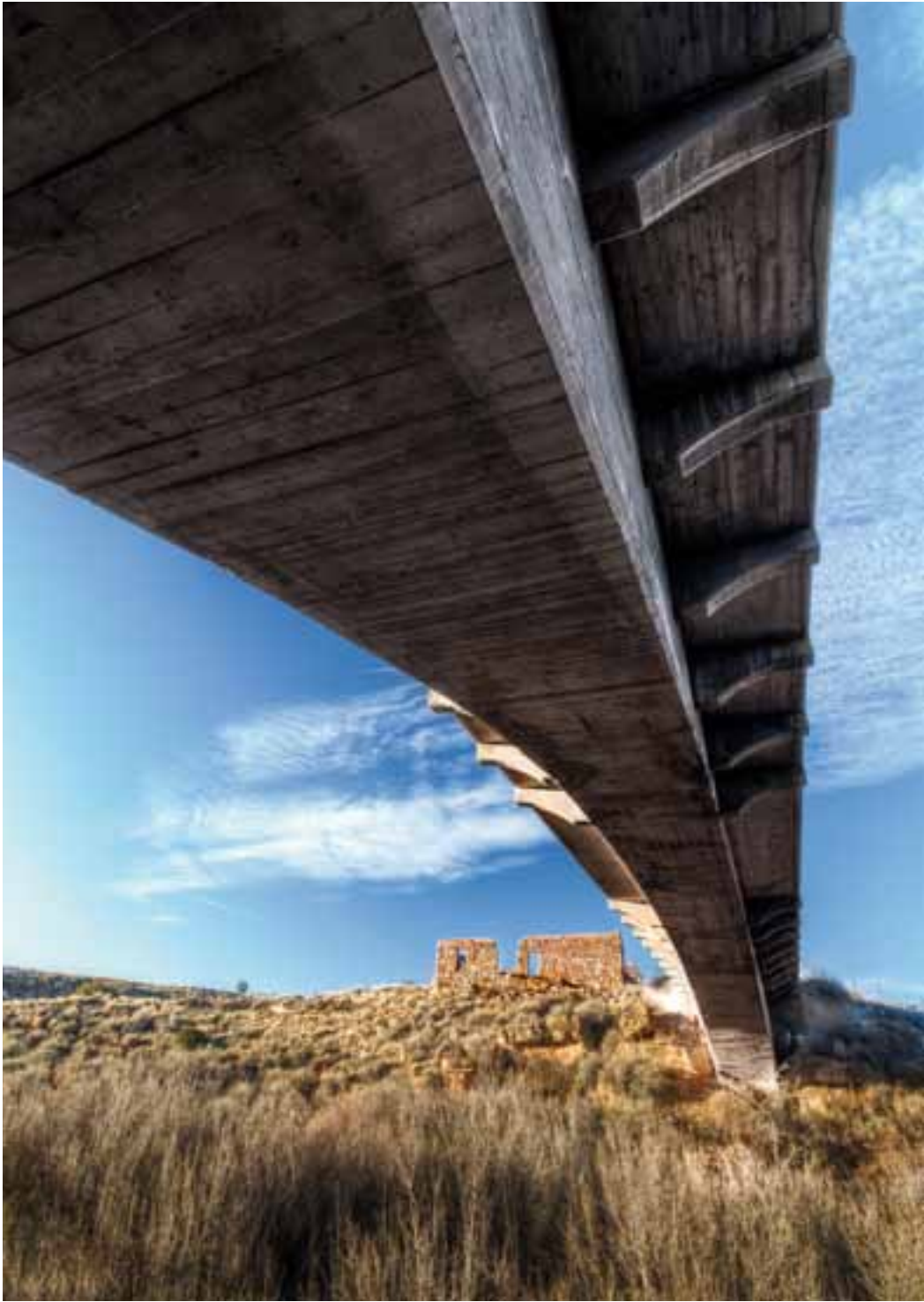
ADDITIONAL READING: For more hikes, pick up a copy of *Arizona Highways Hiking Guide*, which features 52 of the state's best trails — one for each weekend of the year, sorted by seasons. To order a copy, visit www.shoparizonahighways.com/books.



trail guide

LENGTH: 8.2 miles round-trip
DIFFICULTY: Moderate
ELEVATION: 5,634 to 7,082 feet
TRAILHEAD GPS: N 34° 36.934', W 112° 33.058'
DIRECTIONS: From downtown Prescott, go north on Montezuma Street, which becomes Whipple Street and then Iron Springs Road, for 4.5 miles to Granite Basin Road (Forest Road 374). Turn right onto Granite Basin Road and drive 3.8 miles to the Metate Trailhead, just past Granite Basin Lake.
SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: A \$5 day pass is required (free on Wednesdays).
VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None
DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)
HORSES ALLOWED: Yes
USGS MAP: Iron Springs, Jerome Canyon
INFORMATION: Bradshaw Ranger District, 928-443-8000 or www.fs.usda.gov/prescott
LEAVE-NO-TRACE PRINCIPLES:
 • Plan ahead and be prepared.
 • Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
 • Dispose of waste properly and pack out all of your trash.
 • Leave what you find.
 • Respect wildlife and minimize impact.
 • Be considerate of others. **AH**

where is this?



MIKE OLBINSKI

Under Where?

A RESIDENT WHO CLAIMED to be an Apache named this Northern Arizona ghost town. No one knows for certain what the resident's heritage might have been, but history does reveal that he feuded with the gentleman who owned the store opposite his. Eventually, he killed the other shop owner, who was buried in a grave marked "Killed by Indian Miller." Today, only a few abandoned buildings remain in what once was a tourist stop along Historic Route 66. — KELLY VAUGHN KRAMER

February 2013 Answer & Winner

Rooster Cogburn Ostrich Ranch. Congratulations to our winner, Kaley Badger of Cottonwood, Arizona.



KEN ROSS

Win a collection of our most popular books! To enter, correctly identify the location pictured at left and email your answer to editor@arizonahighways.com — type "Where Is This?" in the subject line. Entries can also be sent to 2039 W. Lewis Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85009 (write "Where Is This?" on the envelope). Please include your name, address and phone number. One winner will be chosen in a random drawing of qualified entries. Entries must be postmarked by April 15, 2013. Only the winner will be notified. The correct answer will be posted in our June issue and online at www.arizonahighways.com beginning May 15.

MIND IF WE TAG ALONG?

The state of Arizona gave us our own license plate, and we'd like you to take us for a ride.



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